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FORESTRY
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June 27, 2013

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
330 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Madam Secretary:

I am writing to request all documents related to the "special contract" that your agency entered into with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Cooperative Extension Service to promote the health care law, which you reportedly referenced in an address on June 25, 2013. On June 26, 2013, the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) posted a grants notice for up to \$795,455 of USDA resources to conduct outreach for the health care law. I am extremely disappointed that your agency will yet again inappropriately seek funding to promote the health care law; a purpose Congress specifically rejected.

At a time when there is an ongoing investigation into your inappropriate solicitation of funds from private organizations and into the level of coordination between your agency and Enroll America, it is inexcusable that you continue to defy Congress and raid other agencies in your search for additional funds.

Congress' repeated denial of your requests for additional funds to promote the health care law are largely because of the escalating cost of this law, the clumsy manner in which it has been implemented and the effect it will have on Americans and the quality of their health care. It is wrong for you and for Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to bypass Congress to use taxpayer dollars designated for higher education institutions to prepare a new generation of farmers, among other agricultural goals in order to promote a law HHS is charged to implement. As a former Secretary of Agriculture, I am appalled by this misuse of taxpayer dollars.

As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I am committed to ensuring that taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly and in accordance with Congressional intent, thus I intend to offer an amendment to prohibit your agency from misusing funds in this manner.

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Again, I request details of your "special contract" with USDA, including any promotional or outreach efforts USDA has agreed to conduct or facilitate beyond the grants notice published on June 26, 2013. Additionally, I ask you to cancel this agreement. I look forward to a prompt reply and related action.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Johanns", is written in a cursive style.

Mike Johanns
United States Senator

cc: The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture